

Frequently Asked Questions for Letters Applications

Where do I send my application? Email your application form (plus your resume and bio) to the branch President or Membership Chair. Your sponsor can give you the email address.

What happens next? In most branches, the officers (or the whole branch, if it's a small branch) will vote to approve you as a member. Then the branch President or Membership Chair will email your application to the National Letters Credentials Officer.

What if I don't live near a branch? You can apply to be a Member-at-Large (MAL). In this case, email your application, resume, and bio directly to the Letters Credentials Officer listed on the application. Another option is to join a branch that holds zoom meetings.

What does the Letters Credentials Officer do with the application? The Letters Credentials Officer will evaluate your application packet. If she approves the application, she will send an email to the branch letting them know that you are now a Pen Woman. She will send the application on to the NLAPW headquarters in Washington DC, where it will be processed.

What if I prefer to send my application on paper? Most branches will accept a paper application. Usually, the President or Membership Chair will scan the application (this can be done with any smartphone) and email it to the Letters Credentials Officer.

I know that the NLAPW wants to see publications that I was paid for. What if a literary journal published my poem and paid me with two copies of the journal. Does that count? Yes. Payment in copies counts. Definitely list those publications on your resume.

If I haven't published a book yet, do poems, stories, essays, articles, or columns count as publications? Yes, as long as you were paid. Payment in copies counts. List those on your resume. You are expected to have at least three.

What other kind of professional writing can serve as a credential? Sermons. Plays. Scripts. Digital storytelling. Scholarly articles. Book reviews. Science writing. Book chapters. Magazine columns. Podcasts. Technical writing. Law briefs. Press releases. Lectures. Writing for museum exhibits. Graphic novels. Genealogy reports. Local history. You can list these on your resume and offer explanation in your bio. NLAPW is looking for times that you were paid for your writing.

Does it count if I taught writing workshops or served as an editor or worked as a journalist? Yes. Any employment that involves writing counts. List on your resume.

Should I list prizes I've won for my writing? Yes.

Please note: If you join between February 15 and May 1, you will NOT be asked to pay dues again until the following May.